

STATE OF MAINE  
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Docket No. 2003-888

March 5, 2004

NORTHERN UTILITIES, INC.  
Revision to Terms and Conditions  
(Add Section 6E.- Electronic or Other  
Bill Payment Options)

PROCEDURAL ORDER

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I. Technical Conference

A Technical Conference will be held on March 18, 2004 at 1:30 in the Commission's Hearing Room to discuss outstanding issues in this case and allow the Public Advocate and Commission Staff to ask follow-up questions. Parties interested in participating by phone should contact Lorry Plante at 287-1566.

Northern filed responses to Staff's requests on January 9, 2004. The Public Advocate issued a data request on January 16, 2004. Northern should respond to that data request no later than March 15, 2004.

II. Additional Questions

The Staff has the following questions based on Northern's data responses. Northern should be prepared to discuss responses to these questions at the technical conference.

1. In response to ADR #1, Northern stated that the vendor performs a "risk analysis" based on the anticipated volume of payments to help establish a blended fee to charge customers for credit card payments. Please explain what "risk" is associated with the acceptance of a credit card payment. Also, please explain why that risk that is not applicable to the electronic payment option.
2. Please describe the entire payment process for credit card payments. In the description, please describe each step of the process from the remittance of the payment by the customer to the receipt of the payment by the utility.
3. How will EDS collect the \$5.95 fee for credit card payments? Will the amount be added to the total amount due of the bill or will it be collected directly from the customer? Please provide the same information for ACH payments.
4. What are the specific reasons why Northern found NCO's proposal to be "sub-optimal?"
5. What are the specific reasons why Northern found Bill Matrix's proposal "inadequate?"

6. Please provide the basis for the \$250.00 average monthly bill amount for residential customers and the \$1,000.00 average monthly bill amount for commercial customers referenced in Northern's response to ADR 1-1.

Dated at Augusta, Maine, this 5<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2004.

BY ORDER OF THE HEARING EXAMINER

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Joanne B. Steneck